

## STATISTICS OF APRIL 3-4, 1974 TORNADOES

by

T. Theodore Fujita, The University of Chicago

This superoutbreak of 148 tornadoes in 16 hours and 10 minutes was the largest number on record. The total path mileage was 2,598 miles. Over 300 persons were killed while 5,484 others were injured. 50,000 experienced the twister's fury which they will never forget and many people were "scared to death". Statistics of fatal injuries are: 74% in houses and buildings, 17% in mobile homes, 6% in automobiles, and 3% enroute to shelters.

The tornado outbreak began at 1:10 PM on April 3 and ended at 5:20 AM CDT on the 4th. During the height of the tornadoes, 15 twisters were on the ground simultaneously.

\* Xenia (No. 37), Depauw (No. 40), Sayler Park (No. 43), Brandenburg (No. 47), First Tanner (No. 96) and Guin (No. 101) tornadoes were the six strongest.

\* Cities hit twice by tornadoes were Etowah, Tenn. (3:00 and 5:30 PM); Livingston, Tenn. (7:30 and 11:30 PM); Cleveland, Tenn. (3:05 and 5:05 PM); Tanner, Ala. (7:00 and 7:30 PM); Harvest, Ala. (7:15 and 7:45 PM) and Huntsville, Ala. (10:55 and 11:05 PM).

Each tornado left behind something unusual. Local residents will remember their awesome experiences for years to come. Following are some noteworthy examples.

- \* Monticello Tornado (No. 13) was the longest-track tornado which left a 121-mile path in Indiana.
- \* Windsor Tornado (No. 30) crossed the International boundary twice, from US to Canada and back to US without passport.
- \* Parker Tornado (No. 33) had seven mini-funnels inside, the greatest in number.
- \* Xenia Tornado (No. 37) killed 34 persons, the most fatalities by a single twister.
- \* Depauw Tornado (No. 40) deposited a car into the basement, after blowing away the two-story frame house.
- \* Sayler Park Tornado (No. 43) was the only tri-state tornado. It originated in Indiana and lifted in Ohio, passing through Kentucky.
- \* Brandenburg Tornado (No. 47) crossed the Ohio River, causing a significant fall and subsequent rise of the water level.
- \* Louisville Tornado (No. 48) uprooted the largest number of trees in urban areas. Cherokee Park was hardest hit.
- \* Frankfort Tornado (No. 54) left the widest path, 5-miles wide near Stamping Ground.
- \* Obey River Tornado (No. 87) descended into a 1,000-ft deep canyon with its full strength, and then climbed to the top of the cliff on the other side.
- \* First Tanner Tornado (No. 96) killed six persons in one family in a brick house. All were blown into a pine forest, 250 ft away.
- \* Harmony Tornado (No. 97) and Second Tanner Tornado (No. 98) moved over the same house. The house was unroofed by the first one, and the second twister took the whole house away.
- \* Guin Tornado (No. 101) path appeared distinctly in pictures taken by NASA's Earth Resources Technology Satellite, 600 miles above the earth. Path was still visible in October.
- \* Blue Ridge Tornado (No. 120) moved over the 3,300 ft Betty Mountain, the highest of all tornado paths.
- \* Murphy Tornado (No. 121) left behind the largest number of debarked, shiny trees. Leaves were completely stripped off.
- \* Meadow Bridge Tornado (No. 137) was the worst pre-dawn tornado in the mountains.